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CIA needs nonpartisan leader

On Dec. 19, 1975, the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee approved the nomination of George Bush as director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It will be a mistake if the full Senate votes this month to

confirm Bush as director.

The activities, procedures and policies of the CIA have been scrutinized during the past few months. CIA connections with organized crime, political assassination plots and illegal interference in the lives of U.S. citizens have been revealed to the country.

The time was right for an appointment of a distinguished, able person with experience in the intelligence field who could lead the CIA out of its morale-shattered and corrupt atmosphere.

But President Ford, while shuffling appointees during his personnel shake-up last fall, came up with the name of George Bush to replace outgoing Director William Colby.

Bush was serving as the head of the U.S. liaison office in China at the time of his nomination to the CIA post. But his career has been almost entirely political.

Bush was a U.S.

congressman, a Texas senatorial candidate, and, during former President Nixon's last days in office, chairman of the national Republican party.

Bush is distinguished and able, but has no experience in the intelligence field. He knows little about the workings of the sophisticated agency he will be expected to command.

Bush was forced to declare himself out of consideration for the 1976 Republican vice presidential nomination before being approved by the Senate committee.

He should have declared himself out of the running for CIA director. The full Senate must do it for him.

Future presidents making appointments to non-partisan jobs must break this unfortunate precedent. U.S. citizens will have confidence in the workings of the CIA only when a nonpartisan person is in charge of a nonpartisan agency.

Grant Williams, editor